

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 SP-02 INR-05

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P R 200625Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1453

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAFS: PFOR, PINS, PGOV, PINT, PK, AF

SUBJ: AJMAL KHATTAK STATES HIS CASE TO US

1. SUMMARY: A PERSON PRESENTING HIMSELF AS EXILED NAP (NATIONAL AWAMI PEOPLES PARTY) LEADER AJMAL KHATTAK CALLED AT EMBASSY FEBRUARY 19 AND MADE EXTENSIVE STATEMENT CONCERNING RECENT EVENTS IN PAKISTAN. HOPED ALOUD U.S. MIGHT BE HELPFUL IN SITUATION, WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS POISED ON EDGE OF VIOLENCE. KHATTAK DENIED ANY ROLE IN SHERPAO'S ASSASSINATION AND PROFESSED COMMITMENT TO NON VIOLENCE EVEN THOUGH HE CLAIMED THIS COMMITMENT HAS BEEN TAXED TO UTMOST. NEVERTHELESS SUCCEEDED IN GIVING US DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT SOME KIND OF GOA SUPPORTED "PUSHTUN LIBERATION MOVEMENT" IS BEING CONSIDERED. FLOATED RUMOR OF ARMS DEAL BETWEEN U.S. AND PAKISTAN IN RETURN FOR PORT GWADAR EVEN AS HE HASTENED TO STATE HIS OWN DISBELIEF IN SUCH ARRANGEMENT. ASSIGNED A LONG HISTORY OF DEVIOUSNESS AND POLITICAL CRIME TO BHUTTO AND P.P.P. BUT MORE PARTICULARLY UPON PAK HOME MINISTER ABDUL QAYYUM KHAN WHO KHATTAK STOPS JUST SHORT OF ACCUSING OF SHERPAO MURDER. EMBASSY OFFICER MADE STRONG PRESENTATION OF U.S. POSITION IN AFPAK DISPUTE. KHATTAK LEFT WITH US COPY OF FIVE-PAGE N.A.P. "POSITION PAPER" IN FORM OF LETTER DATED 15 FEBRUARY 1975 TO KURT WALDHEIM. END SUMMARY.

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2. MAN PURPORTING TO REPRESENT AJMAL KHATTAK TELEPHONED EMBASSY FEBRUARY 18 AND ASKED FOR APPOINTMENT FOR KHATTAK TO SEE AMBASSADOR. REPRESENTATIVE WAS TOLD VISITORS WERE WELCOME AT U.S. EMBASSY AND WERE RECEIVED AT APPROPRIATE LEVEL. ON FEBRUARY 19 AT 1030 (LOCAL) A MAN WHO PRESENTED HIMSELF AS AJMAL KHATTAK CAME TO EMBASSY AND I ARRANGED TO HAVE HIM RECEIVED BY POLITICAL COUNSELOR.

3. VISITOR IS TALLISH, BEARDED, GRAYING STURDY GENT OF ABOUT 50 WHOSE SERIOUSNESS AND BLACK HORN RIM GLASSES GIVE HIM A KIND OF SCHOLARLY AIR. HE WORE GREY HOMESPUN OUTFIT IN THE "PUSHTUN" CUT (BAGGY PANTS, SHIRT) AND WAS WELL BARBERED AND TURNED OUT EVEN WHILE MANAGING TO LOOK AS THOUGH A CERTAIN DISHEVELMENT WAS A CONSEQUENCE OF HIS POLITICAL PREOCCUPATIONS. HE APPEARED NERVOUS WITH THE FORMALITIES OF ENTERING AND LEAVING, BUT TALKED EASILY AND EVEN ELOQUENTLY (THOUGH HIS ENGLISH HAS LIMITATIONS) FOR AN HOUR AND A HALF ONCE SEATED.

4. KHATTAK (AS HE SHALL BE REFERRED TO HENCEFORTH IN THIS MESSAGE) STATED HE SEES HIMSELF AS ONE OF LAST MEMBERS OF NAP CAPABLE OF SPEAKING OUT. DURING HIS NEARLY TWO YEARS OF EXILE HERE HE HAS FOUND IT INAPPROPRIATE TO MAKE STATEMENTS, HE SAID, BUT NOW THERE IS NO ONE OTHER THAN HIMSELF WHO CAN ATTEMPT GAINING AN UNDERSTANDING FOR HIS PARTY FROM "SUCH FRIENDS AS YOURSELVES". HE STATED HOPE OF MAKING "OTHER CALLS" PRESUMABLY TO OTHER EMBASSIES. WE MADE NO COMMITMENT TO SEE HIM AGAIN.

5. DIFFICULT TO KNOW WHETHER KHATTAK WAS ADDING LAST MINUTE EMBELLISH-

MENT OF MAKING SUBTLE POINT IN SUBTLE MANNER, BUT TOWARD END OF CONVERSATION HE STATED HOPE THAT U.S. MIGHT "DO SOMETHING IN PAKISTAN", PRESUMABLY TOWARD CONTROLLING BHUTTO, WHICH MIGHT HELP A SITUATION KHATTAK HAD DESCRIBED AS DEPLORABLE. (OUR COMMENTS DESCRIBED IN PARA 11).

6. ELSEWHERE REFERRING TO UNITED STATES AND POSSIBLE CONNECTION WITH SHERPAO ASSASSINATION KHATTAK RECOUNTED "A RUMOR HEARD EVERYWHERE...IN KABUL AND EVERYWHERE IN BALUCHISTAN AND THE NORTHWEST FRONTIER PROVINCE, ACCORDING TO THE INFORMATION THAT I'M GETTING" THAT DURING RECENT BHUTTO TRIP US. ARMS HAD BEEN PROMISED IN RETURN FOR BASE RIGHTS AT PAKISTANI PORT OF GWADAR.
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(NOTE: THIS RUMOR HAD COME TO US EARLIER THROUGH OTHER SOURCES). SHERPAO MURDER HAD SOMEHOW FACILITATED THIS IN "DEMONSTRATING TO THE AMERICANS THAT BHUTTO REALLY DOES NEED HELP". SHERPAO ASSASSINATION, ACCORDING TO THIS RUMOR, HAD HISTORICAL PRECEDENT IN MURDER OF LIAQUAT ALI KHAN, "AFTER WHICH, SO THE STORY GOES, THE US HAD ACHIEVED ITS BASE RIGHTS IN PESHAWAR" ACCORDING TO KHATTAK.

KHATTAK HIMSELF PROFESSES TO DISCOUNT THESE STORIES AS COMPLETE FABRI-

CATIONS, ADDING THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED THEM "ONLY IN CONNECTION WITH THE DOZENS OF THEORIES OF REASONS FOR SHERPAO'S DEATH". "BUT THE BUSINESS OF ARMS IN PAKISTAN IN RETURN FOR THE PORT WAS" HE ADDED, "SOMETHING WE JUST READ ABOUT IN NEWSWEEK". KHATTAK WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED THIS AS WELL AS SEVERAL OTHER THEORIES OF SHERPAO MURDER RECENTLY WITH PRESIDENT DAOUD, WITH THE TWO OF THEM TICKING OFF TOGETHER WHAT AND WHOSE INTERESTS MIGHT HAVE BEEN INVOLVED. DAOUD, HE SAID, HAD RULED OUT THE AMERICAN CONNECTION. (NOTE: KHATTAK AT THIS POINT CONVEYED SENSE OF PUZZLEMENT AND SUCCEEDED IN CONJURING EVEN A NOTE OF DESPERATION IN SCENE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND DAOUD AS THEY TRIED TO FIND ANSWERS TO SHERPAO MURDER.)

7 KHATTAK INCLINES TO THEORY (STATED PUBLICLY IN INTERVIEW WITH BAKHTAR CORRESPONDENT AS DESCRIBED KABUL 955) THAT ABDUL QAYYUM KHAN FOR REASONS OF PERSONAL AMBITION AND OUT OF FEAR OF NAP-PPP RAPPROACHMENT ENGINEERED THE SHERPAO KILLING. KHATTAK STOPPED SHORT OF DIRECT ACCUSATION, HOWEVER, STATING THAT A KIND OF POLITICAL LOGIC POINTS FINGER AT QAYYUM BUT THAT "I WAS NOT THERE, CERTAINLY, AND NO ONE I KNOW REALLY KNOWS FOR SURE WHO IT WAS WHO ASSASSINATED SHERPAO".

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ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-14 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SP-02 PM-03 INR-05

CIAE-00 DODE-00 IO-03 /039 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1454

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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8. ASKED SPECIALLY ABOUT CLAIMS HE RUNS UNDERGROUND ORGANIZATION IN PAKISTAN (LONDON 1945) KHATTAK HEWED TO LINE THAT THESE WERE NOT SINISTER GROUPS BUT MERELY "PATHAN YOUTH ORGANIZATION"

GROUPS OF VOLUNTEERS "WHO ARRANGE MEETINGS AND PROCESSIONS". HE ADMITS THAT AN ADHERENT OF ONE OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS COULD POSSIBLY HAVE GOTTED AHEAD OF POLICY AND EXPLODED SHERPAO, BUT SAID HE BELIEVED THIS IMPOSSIBLE SINCE HE KNOWS YOUTH GROUP LEADERS AND THINKS THEY KNOW THAT ASSASSINATION OF SHERPAO WOULD PRECIPITATE TROUBLE FROM WHICH NOTHING WAS TO BE GAINED. HE ALSO CITED INFORMATION FROM NAP ADHERENT AND PESHAWAR UNIVERSITY LEADER AFRASIA KHATTAK (A TRIBAL BUT NO "FAMILY" RELATION OF AJMAL) WHO BEMOANED MURDER ON DAY SHERPAO AND AFRASIA WERE TO ATTEND SAME DINNER PARTY. THIS HAD BEEN ONE MOVE APPARENTLY DESIGNED TO BRING ABOUT NAP-PPP HARMONY. AT SAME TIME AJMAL KHATTAK MADE NO BONES ABOUT CLANDESTINE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION AND ORGANIZING "YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS" WHICH HE CLAIMS TO CONTROL.

9. KHATTAK DENIED ANY RESORT TO VIOLENCE ON HIS PART UP TO THIS POINT, BUT GAVE SEVERAL INDICATIONS THAT DEGREE OF PROVOCATION FOR VIOLENCE HAD BEEN REACHED OR PERHAPS EVEN EXCEEDED. HIS CONVERSATION WAS LACED WITH COMMENTS SUCH AS "IF OUR RIGHTS ARE NOT ASSURED WE CAN GO TO ANY MEANS", "IF OUR GOALS CANNOT BE ATTAINED BY POLITICAL MEANS THEN WE MUST STRUGGLE OUTSIDE THE CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK", AND "THERE

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ARE ONLY TWO ROADS OPEN TO US AT THIS POINT; TO GO BEFORE BHUTTO WITH OUR WIVES AND CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND MOTHERS AND ENLYQ# TO HIS CUTTING OUR THROATS, OR TO TAKE A COURSE OF VIOLENCE". IN SAME CONNECTION KHATTAK CITED WHAT HE AVERRED WAS STATEMENT MADE BY QAYYUM ON PAKISTANI RADIO PREVIOUS EVENING (FEBRUARY 18) THAT NAP WOULD BE CRUSHED. (KHATTAK CITED USE OF URDU WORD HE DESCRIBED AS MEANING ACTUALLY UPROOTED, SHREDDED, BURNED AND PITCHED OUT).

10. KHATTAK ALSO CITED IN CONNECTION WITH USE OF VIOLENCE THAT THE "PUSHTUN ZELME (YOUTH) -- PRESUMABLY REPRESENTATIVES OF GROUPS DESCRIBED IN PARA 8 -- HAD DECIDED AT A RECENT CONFERENCE THAT VIOLENCE WOULD BE NECESSARY IN ORDER TO REACH PEOPLE'S GOALS, ANDHE ADDED, "I SHARE THAT OPINION". THE YOUTH GROUP ACCUSED BHUTTO OF HAVING INITIATED THE VIOLENCE, PRESUMABLY MAKING ITS USE BY HIS OPPONENTS INEVITABLE. A PARTICULAR ACT OF VIOLENCE KHATTAK ACCUSED BHUTTO OF USING AGAINST PUSHTUN PEOPLE WAS UNLEASHING PANJABI MEMBERS OF NATIONAL DEFENSE FORCES TO PATROL NWFP TOWNS AND VILLAGES, WHEN HE (BHUTTO) KNOWS THIS TO BE VIOLATION OF MOST BASIC PASHTUN TENETS.(KHATTAK ADDED AS ANECDOTE THAT HIS FATHER HAD ONCE SHOT A BOY FROM A NEIGHBORING VILLAGE FOR PRESUMING TO WHISTLE IN FRONT OF THE KHATTAK FAMILY HOME). KHATTAK ADDED HIS FEAR OF ESCALATING VIOLENCE LEADING PEOPLE TO "TAKE TO THE MOUNTAINS." (NOTE: IN WHAT APPEARED TO BE A SLIP OF TONGUE, HE ADDED "THEN IT WILL BE UP TO AFGHANS TO AID US". WE HAD DISTINCT IMPRESSION

KHATTAK (AND PERHAPS GOA) CONSIDERING SOME SORT OF "PUSHTUN LIBERATION MOVEMENT" WHICH WOULD GIVE QUASI-GOVERNMENT STATUS TO ANTI-GOP ANTICS).

11. AFTER LISTENING TO KHATTAK, POLCONS MADE STRONG PRESENTATION THAT U.S. WAS FRIEND OF BOTH PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN, SOUGHT ONLY FRIENDSHIP WITH AND AMONG THESE NATIONS AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THEIR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

ADDED THAT WE DEPLORE VIOLENT EVENTS WHICH POISON POLITICAL PROCESSES. KHATTAK AGREED THAT VIOLENCE WRONG AND REGRETTED FACT THAT NON-VIOLENT CONSTITUTIONALISTS SUCH AS HIMSELF SHOULD HAVE BEEN FORCED SO NEAR TO POINT OF DESPERATION. KHATTAK SAID: "IF BHUTTO WOULD BUT SIT WITH US AND GUARANTEE US THE RIGHTS OF THE CONSTITUTION WHICH HE HIMSELF PROCLAIMED...THEN EVEN NOW, DESPITE ALL THAT HAS HAPPENDED, WE COULD SETTLE OUR

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POLITICAL DIFFERENCES AND LIVE IN PEACE".

12. KHATTAK LEFT BEHIND COPY OF A NAP"POSITION PAPER" IN FORM OF LETTER TO UN SECGEN KURT WALDHEIM DATED FEBRUARY 15. TEXT IS REHASH OF FAIRLY WELL KNOWN EVENTS AND INTERPRETATIONS, BUT ADDS NOTHING OF GREAT INTEREST TO KHATTAK REMARKS AT EMBASSY. LETTER COPIES POUCHED TO ISLAMABAD AND DEPARTMENT AND TRANSCRIPT OF KHATTAK-HALLMAN CONVERSATION WILL FOLLOW.

13. NEA MAY WISH TO INFORM USUN THAT LETTER TO SECGEN IS ENROUTE.

14. POLCONS HALLMAN TRAVELLING TO ISLAMABAD FEBRUARY 23 FOR CONSULTATION. WILL ATTEMPT CONFIRM IDENTIFICATION OF "KHATTAK" AT THAT TIME AND REVIEW TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH US EMBASSY PAKISTAN.

CURRAN.

NOTE BY OC/T: #AS RECEIVED.

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Message Attributes

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